

Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Bulletin No. 270

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The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club is devoted to the study of all forms of Natural History, and is comprised of both experts and beginners. We cover a wide variety of topics, and we support conservation. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, except January, in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania from 7.45 p.m. Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting outside the main entrance to the Museum, Macquarie Street.

The Club's address is GPO Box 68A, Hobart, 7001 and the club contact is Don Hird (34 4293).

Programme

Thurs. 6 May	7.45p.m.: Will Fletcher, from the <i>Plants of Tasmania Nursery</i> will speak on aspects of propagating and landscaping with Tasmanian Plants.
Sat. 8 May	Sat. 8 May 10 a.m.: Outing to the <i>Plants of Tasmania Nursery</i> at Ridgeway. If the weather is kind we may walk to the top of Chimney Pot Hill for lunch and inspect the Tasmanian endemic plants typical of dolerite hillsides in south-east Tasmania.
Thurs. 3 June	7.45p.m.: Pat Barwick, a Hobart-based Landscape Consultant, will speak on natural roadside remnants in Tasmania.
Sat. 5 June	10 a.m.: Outing to view significant roadsides around Hobart retaining at least some natural characteristics.
Thurs. 1 July	Thurs. 1 July 7.45p.m.: Sue Alexander from Parks & Wildlife will speak about her project looking at outbreaks and control of <i>Phytophthora</i> , the Cinnamon Fungus. <i>Phytophthora</i> is implicated in the dieback of trees and other native flora, particularly where drainage patterns may have been altered and spores of the fungus have been introduced.
Sat. 3 July	10 a.m.: Outing to visit <i>Phytophthora</i> project sites for a first hand look at the symptoms and remedies for this pernicious problem.

New Members A special welcome to our new members Flora Gregor and Paul Black.

Federation of Field Naturalists Clubs of Tasmania Our Club hosted the last meeting of the Federation at Bronte Park Chalet on the weekend 19-21 March 1993. More than 50 naturalists converged on Bronte for this biennial event. Saturday saw a boat/walking trip around Lake St Clair and a botanical examination of forestry sites close to Bronte. The weekend's guest speaker was Dr Mick Brown from Forestry who gave an illustrated talk on the effects of fire on Tasmanian forest habitats. The business meeting received reports from each of the 6 clubs in the Federation, including the active latest entrant, Deloraine Field Nats. Some discussion concerned the perceived function of the Federation, particularly as a potential lobbyist for Tasmanian conservation issues, the consensus being that timeliness makes this thorough pursuit of this sort of activity. Nonetheless, the Federation is useful for exchanging ideas and expertise amongst naturalists from around the state. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on King Island.

Mammal Survey Group. A new challenge has arisen in that the loan of our small-mammal live-traps and our harp (bat) trap has been rescinded. Without these 50 "Elliott traps" much of our recent activity is unfortunately hardly viable. At around \$28 each, the capital outlay is really too great for the club to sustain in one purchase. Alternatives include grant applications under way, a "sponsor a trap" campaign, possible alternative technologies, or possibly focussing also on other faunas. We feel that systematic survey work of this sort is worthwhile and welcome comments, suggestions or donations. Observations (in writing please) continue to be welcome. Please contact Don Hird, ph 34 4293 (H), 21 5912 (W).

Island Survey Programme

In October a survey expedition to Schouten Island (south of Freycinet Peninsula) is planned, possibly in conjunction with that month's club excursion. Ideally this will be of up to a week's duration with weekend participation available. Schouten has been an island for about eight thousand years and has both granite and dolerite geological substrata and consequential floras. We will negotiate with Parks staff for appropriate permits, survey programs and transport. By the May meeting some preliminary details will be available; we will need to start more detailed planning soon.

The idea for this excursion ensued from discussion of which of Tasmania's rich heritage of offshore islands would be feasible and worthy of closer examination from the natural history viewpoint. Swan Island in June last year commenced the program. Betsy Island is another potential target, as evidenced by Kelsey Aves' article on a Club visit written up in the *Tasmanian Naturalist* of August 1951. Each of these islands has a mixed history of European visitation and forsaken settlement.

Committee Deliberations

Late in March the old guard of the committee welcomed new blood, Tony Conlan, Genevieve Gates, Starola Jacka and Eliza Watkins. Special thanks are due to Phil and Sue Collier who worked tirelessly on last year's committee, they are taking time out this year, partly for extensive vocational leave. Genevieve is membership and mailout officer while Starola is our new club librarian.

Junior naturalists and their access to and interest in the Club was discussed by the committee. Historically, some of our current longest serving members started in the Junior TFNC as far back as the 1920's! Times change and we decided that it's not practical to run a separate program for juniors ourselves at present, although we assist by cooperating with CSIRO's Double Helix junior science club, for example. We do welcome and value junior participation. Some excursions are of necessity somewhat arduous for the less mobile members, when this occurs we will advise through the bulletin.

Our long awaited Butterfly book in the latter stages of the publishing process. We will endeavour to advise members in time for the launch. Final pricing including that to club members will be advised. We are also looking towards reprinting *Tasmanian Birds* in time for next summer's tourism season.

Another minor publishing venture is the release of an *Amphibious* package ! This will include a copy of a cassette tape of *Tasmanian Frog Calls* compiled by Alan Hewer and Charles Taylor and the *Tasmanian Amphibians* book in the *Fauna of Tasmania* handbooks series. These should be ready at the next meeting at a cost of \$10 the set.

What publishing ventures should the Club be involved in ? Modest publications like the *Naturalist* are today easier and more convenient than ever to produce. Local guides could be worthwhile, eg to the marine life of a typical rocky marine foreshore in the lower Derwent estuary. Many books on such topics cover such a wide area and range of topics that it's difficult to identify particular local specimens in the hand. Of course we would need to identify a worthwhile audience for such a book, perhaps the worst thing about modern publishing is that it's so easy that we risk being drowned in its output! Please feel free to discuss this or other Club issues with a committee member at your next opportunity.
